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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a directed-study seminar course in the craft of poetry using Malcolm Knowles' andragogical principles of teaching (related to the educational process of adults as contrasted with pedagogy, the educational process of children). The background and significance of the course are discussed and procedures for administering it, along with some of its limitations and assumptions, are explained. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of such a course for colleges, and recommendations for teaching a poetry course to adults as a directed-study seminar. The appendixes contain the complete course syllabus, a worksheet for analyzing a poem, and a form for evaluating the course. (TJ)

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THE CRAFT OF POETRY: A DIRECTED-STUDY SEMINAR COURSE PLANNED BY KNOWLES' ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Learning Theory and Applications Module

by

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THE CRAFT OF POETRY:
A DIRECTED-STUDY SEMINAR COURSE PLANNED BY KNOWLES' ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES

INTRODUCTION

During recent years, enrollment in sophomore courses at El Centro College (and other urban community colleges) has declined. Many times, five to ten students enroll in a course -- and the class is cancelled. This, in turn, discourages future enrollment in sophomore courses. It hurts our students, and hurts our college's image, credibility, enrollment, economy, and morale. We need an economically sound way to protect sophomore course offerings -- and reduce cancellations.

A course for which a limited number of students might be expected to enroll would be a sophomore-level course in The Craft of Poetry. This course could be expected to attract students with two main motivations: they would seek to improve their abilities to read poetry, and/or to improve their abilities to write poetry.

The purpose of this practicum has been to develop the plan for such an individualized directed-study course, with major emphasis on student projects; this course offering could be feasible only with the course being well planned and somewhat "packaged" in advance.

In these circumstances, traditional course-operation

procedures seemed unlikely to succeed. The several students enrolled are expected to have some needs and interests in common, but beyond this, they need an opportunity to be guided individually in learning what they seek to learn, and in being dealt with as independent adults. These circumstances provided an ideal opportunity to apply the andragogical principles of Malcolm Knowles. Knowles' term andragogy designates the educational process of adults (vs. pedagogy, the educational process of children).[1]

During spring semester 1978, a proposal was submitted to the Instruction Office, El Centro College, to develop this course plan. The proposal was approved: English 215, The Craft of Poetry, would be offered during spring semester 1979, along with two other courses to be administered on the same directed-study seminar basis (although these other two would not be planned by andragogical principles).

Developing this course plan, then, has involved several processes:

Administrative feasibility was determined -- the methods by which students may enroll in and receive credit for this non-traditional course.

Literature on poetry was surveyed, in order to evolve an outline-summary of poetic techniques, to provide a basic organizational structure.

[1]Malcolm S. Knowles, The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy Versus Pedagogy (New York: Association Press, 1970), p. 37.

Principles of andragogy were studied, to adapt these to the study of poetic techniques.

Course materials were selected: a textbook to be used on a reference/resource basis, and various optional materials to which students could have access.

The opening, planning course sessions were designed, to include presentation of the overview of poetic techniques; suggestions (by instructor and students) of several options and possible approaches; establishment of required minimum course competencies -- specific techniques student should be able to recognize and use; assessment of students' current knowledge of the craft of poetry; and self-diagnosis of personal learning objectives in this course.

A series of project options were created -- for students to choose amongst, or to supplement by their own project proposals.

A learning design model was developed: an outline of weekly seminars within semester format.

An instrument was developed for end-of-course evaluation, whereby students may assess personal achievement during the course, and set their goals for future self-directed study of poetry.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

One of the "formats for individual learning" within which, Knowles says, andragogical education may be applied, is a "directed study program with an individual." He also advocates various learning groups.[2] The present course plan is a blend of these two formats: a directed studies program in which students meet as a weekly seminar to report on their learning activities.

As pointed out in the Nova University syllabus, Learning Theory and Applications,

> Of prime consideration in the application of learning theory in the classroom is the long-established fact of individual differences. People learn at different rates and in different ways, rendering a curriculum which does not allow for these facts detrimental to optimum learning. ...Educators and psychologists have long urged the varying of teaching techniques to accommodate individual differences....A diagnostic-prescriptive approach to individualizing and humanizing instruction while optimizing learning...[3]

Such an andragogical approach is related to Gestalt approach, as is evident in Fischer's explanation of Gestalt curriculum planning:

> Since the whole is more than the sum of the parts, the curriculum content is dealt with primarily as a coherent whole....Designing the framework leaves room for student proposed content so that the curriculum content consists of what is meaningful to the student now and is in accordance with present student motives and interests. ...Emphasis is placed on additional materials students collect and contribute from their personal experiences

[2] Ibid., p. 269.

[3] John Losak, Learning Theory and Applications (Fort Lauderdale: Nova University, 1974), pp. 41-44.

> and community resources. The text provides ample opportunity for students to add to the content through individual projects, problem solving, and creative expression. ...The individual students are of central importance in curriculum planning under the Gestalt approach.... Students help plan the curriculum in the light of their own abilities, interests, needs and motives....to gear learning experiences to individuals through knowing each student as a person, providing individual project work, capitalizing on student experiences, and encouraging creative expression and nonconformity.[4]

Losak, as quoted above, referred to "individualizing and humanizing instruction." This aspect of andragogical technique also applies to Hogan's definition of "humanistic self-instruction":

> The instruction is most humanistic when the student is permitted to act as an autonomous, free, committed individual, choosing which objectives to attain or how to attain them or when or at what pace or with what resources, and so on. The more decisions the student makes as a committed, autonomous individual, the more individual and humanistic the instruction.[5]

But Hogan goes on to stress that the instructor is still responsible for the planning role:

> All purposeful instruction is linear....The concepts taught are not chaotically or unsystematically presented. ...The learner must proceed from beginning to end through a course that the instructor, facilitator, or author has previously plotted....Structured materials insure that those basic skills are learned quickly and efficiently so students can more easily use those skills to find their own creative, individual style with encouragement and criticism from the instructor.[6]

[4]Guerin A. Fischer, "S-R vs. Gestalt," Nova University lecture presentation outline (no date), pp. 2-3.

[5]R. Craig Hogan, "Humanistic Self-Instruction," College Composition and Communication, 29:262 (October 1978).

[6]Ibid., 29:263.

Fundamental in development of this directed-study course was the establishment of a philosophical base emphasizing the craft of poetry -- its techniques -- as tangible, common groundwork both for aspiring poets and lovers of ppetry. Appreciation/analysis exercises and poetry-writing exercises have been planned to provide access to and reinforcement for each other. Both "verse and its subclass poetry," to use Wood's terms, are included; "the distinction here is: Do the verses produce a deep emotional response, or not? If not, they remain mere verse; if they do, they are properly labeled poetry."[7] But the techniques, at least, are teachable (in probable contrast to "deep emotional response.")

Kraft provides further theoretical basis for such an approach, delineating poetry from other literature:

> Our century has been divided by two very different views of the nature and function of literature....The traditional view, the idea of art as imitation...conceives of literature as a framer of statements about the world that makes it the rival of science....(But) the poem stands apart from the rest of reality; it is not about something like scientific statement or a mimetic fiction; rather it is a thing in its own right.[8]

The literature suggests various poetic methods which can be harmoniously integrated with an andragogical approach. Two such methods, for example, are provided by Swiss and Kulkosky. Swiss describes the advantages of concrete poetry:

[7]Clement Wood, Poets' Handbook (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1940), p. 11.

[8]Quentin G. Kraft, "Science and Poetics. Old and New," College English, 37:169-170 (October 1975).

> Concrete poetry is primarily concerned with the process of human perception and the interdisciplinary cross-over of mediums and aesthetics....provides valuable insight and inspiration for creative activity concerning language and words...is absolutely necessary in these times because of the effect concrete poetry is having on metaphor, poetry, and language in general....To understand concrete poetry is to realize how dependent the concept of concreteness is on the abstract concepts of space and time.[9]

Kulkosky provides a very specific process for generating ideas. He tells of a word list of abstract nouns, distributed at a poetry workshop --"vague generalities that young poets would do well to avoid." These were among the words listed:

eternity	joy	truth	illusion
pain	love	beauty	life
loneliness	honor	grief	heaven

He noticed that from these words could be developed a "matrix for composing aphorisms: -- is the -- of --." Any word on the list can be used in any blank -- e.g., "Pain is the love of illusion." "Joy is the beauty of life." "Loneliness is the truth of heaven." With no duplication of words within a single aphorism, fifteen words could generate 2,730 three-word combinations! This admittedly mechanical device, however, can have value:

> Here and there a line or a pair of lines begins to catch at the tail of a poem; that the rubbing together of words that one would ordinarily not combine occasionally makes sparks, however weak....Another benefit is that the generation process demonstrates that much of today's poetry is recondite -- that is, either abstruse or profound. Knowing how it got that way is more valuable than using all the tools of literary analysis to decide

[9]Thom Swiss, "Approaches to Teaching Concrete Poetry: An Annotated Bibliography," College English, 38:46 (September 1976).

> which category it falls into. Which is an abstruse or profound way of saying that poets fool around with language even in their somber moods....The process, manipulative or not, is an analog of making poems. The conventional poet sifts through the mind for combinations of words that achieve a desired resonance. The process poet also sifts through combinations of words, but generated outside the mind. Both must be able to recognize discovery of an esthetically effective combination.[10]

(Similarly, students in the present course are asked to develop their own word lists -- nouns, adjectives, and verbs -- as a raw material source in writing poetry.)

Two partial course models were discovered. At Abilene Christian University at Dallas during Fall 1975, Jones taught a sophomore poetry course to reluctant policemen, in which he invited students to write poetry on a voluntary or optional-assignment basis. He began to receive brief poems expressing their negative reactions; then gradually, poems of improving quality; and at last, some really excellent poems.

> My auditors were primarily middle-aged police officers ...a captive audience of criminal justice majors, forced into the class because...a schedule conflict prevented many of them from taking the only other sophomore literature course offered at night that semester.
>
> I noted that English 2323 was not a course in creative writing, that students would not be required to write poetry, only to read, analyze, and hopefully enjoy it. As something of an afterthought, I suggested that the more poetry one reads, the more one develops the desire to write poetry himself, noted that their profession provided them with a great deal of emotional raw material for fashioning into poetry, and invited them to submit on a voluntary basis any poems that they might write. I would, in turn, react to their poems myself and present them anonymously to the class for critical evaluation.

[10] Edward Kulkosky, "Process Poems," College English, 38:413-417 (December 1976).

> The immediate reaction seemed to be a universal smirk.
>
> (As reinforcement to the suggestion, writing assignments were sometimes an either/or proposition. One assignment, for example, allowed this option: either "Identify the symbol and explain the symbolism in each of the following passages," or "Write a poem, in any form, that describes a simple object or situation so that it picks up symbolic overtones as the poem progresses.")
>
> Rather quickly, however, the smirk was transferred to paper in poetic form. As I came to class each week, an anonymous poem criticizing our textbook lay on the desk at the front of the room....As the early weeks of the semester passed, this sort of good-natured spoof caught on so that other students -- as indicated by differences in handwriting -- began to contribute to the preclass poetic free-for-all, and some of the verse began to acquire more finesse, more evidence of a growing knowledge of poetry, and a broader content.
>
> The poetic pokes at the textbook finally ceased. In their place, however, came a slow trickle of poems in response to the "or" assignments and, gradually, poems composed voluntarily....
>
> (By the end of the course), the policemen had a grasp of poetic fundamentals, at least a nodding acquaintance with many major poets and poems, and -- perhaps most important of all -- an expanded concept of what is "relevant" to a college education and to life. Because they had entered a domain that could not be measured with utilitarian yardsticks, it was initially repugnant to most of them. Working with poets, poems, and poetic processes, however, they had gradually come to see that poetry (and, by extension, literature in general; and, by further extension, the humanities in general) was not all that separate from their worlds as professionals and as human beings.[11]

A second partial course model was developed by Turco for State University of New York College at Oswego -- poetry courses taught both on campus and by correspondence. These

[11] Jesse Jones, "'Transvaluing' or 'Value Expansion'?: The Case of the Poetic Policemen," Journal of Higher Education, 47:715-719 (November/December 1976).

courses are built on the premise of application of poetic techniques through written exercises as the means to develop skill both in writing one's own poetry and appreciating the poetry of others:

> The complexity of poetry does not derive from single elements, but from manipulating these elements simultaneously in the total art object that we call a "poem." But if each element is mastered individually, the unconscious mind will absorb it and eventually enable one to write better than he might have thought possible. The elements become "second nature," and the resultant poems are "natural." The poet, when he has developed his techniques, just sits down and writes -- he doesn't have to say to himself, "Now I'm going to build a metaphor." He just does it, because he has learned how to make metaphors. But while he is learning his art, he must expend as much sweat as the beginning painter, or architect, or musician. It's a long way from piano finger exercises to the concert hall, but the early training is essential, and the final performance seems effortless. It is in this seeming that art lies, and poetry is as much an art as any other....
>
> But if he has no techniques with which to work, he will write on a lower level than he would have if he had mastered his craft.[12]

And Symonds emphasizes the importance of learning how to learn, for post-course continued learning:

> Instead of aiming at completion (of a textbook, a syllabus, or a course of study), a teacher would do well to plan to cover less ground and to put more stress on method and procedure in the ground covered. Students need to be helped to learn the most efficient methods of study, the use of materials, and skills that will help them in their learning....help students to work independently so that if they wish, they can complete the textbook or the syllabus on their own. Helping students to acquire skills and methods is the best assurance

[12]Lewis Turco, Poetry: An Introduction Through Writing (Reston, Virginia: Reston Publishing Company, Inc., 1973), pp. 19-20.

that learning will transfer.[13]

Knowles summarizes this method in seven steps:

When the principles of andragogy are translated into a process for planning and operating educational programs, that process turns out to be quite different from the curriculum planning and teaching processes traditionally employed in youth education....This andragogical process involves the following phases:

1. The establishment of a climate conducive to adult learning.
2. The creation of an organizational structure for participative planning.
3. The diagnosis of needs for learning.
4. The formulation of directions of learning (objectives).
5. The development of a design of activities.
6. The operation of the activities.
7. The rediagnosis of needs for learning (evaluation).[14]

PROCEDURES

1. Course administration was determined.

Administratively, The Craft of Poetry has been scheduled for Spring 1979 as one part of a three-part package. Three sophomore-level courses -- each anticipated to attract too few enrollees for a full section -- are concurrently scheduled with the same instructor, as follows:

English 215, The Craft of Poetry, 3 credit hours, Monday 11:00 - 11:50 and TBA

English 216, Literary Humor, 3 credit hours, Wednesday 11:00 - 11:50 and TBA

Speech 206, Oral Interpretation, 3 credit hours Friday 11:00 - 11:50 and TBA

[13]Percival M. Symonds, What Education Has to Learn from Psychology (New York: Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1965), pp. 78-79.

[14]Knowles, p. 54.

Each of these course listings bears the following notation:

> This course will hold formal class one hour a week. The student will be accountable for independent and tutorial study for the remaining two class hours, in addition to regular homework assignments. Students receiving VA and other benefits requiring that a certain number of hours be spent in the classroom should check with their funding sources before registering for this course.[15]

Students will be accountable -- via signed logs -- for independent work outside class (shown as TBA).

This triple-course comprises "one course" of the instructor's teaching load, involving three class-hours per week. This multi-preparation is feasible only with the three directed-study seminar courses well planned and "packaged" in advance.

Precedent for concurrent scheduling has been established locally with math labs, art labs, writing labs, etc. In these, two or more courses are scheduled at the same class period, to be taught by the instructor on an individualized one-room-schoolhouse basis. The determinants are the instructor's class hours (e.g. three per week) and pupil ratio (e.g. 1:15-30 combined enrollment) approximating those of a "standard" course.

The advantages are to allow low-enrollment courses to be offered, and to provide anti-cancellation insurance for each other.

[15]El Centro College Class Schedule, Spring 1979, pp. 21, 22, 39.

2. Several prominent poetry textbooks were surveyed, for two purposes:

First, to collect basic terminology of the craft of poetry; to arrive at a consensus, among these; and to synthesize, from these, an outline of poetic techniques. As developed, this outline included four categories of techniques: poetic language, poetic genre, poetic sound patterns, and poetic symbolism. (The full outline is included in Appendix A).

Second, these texts were surveyed to select one most appropriate as the assigned text of the course, to be used on a reference/resource basis. As Knowles advises,

> The textbook has been as much a liability as an asset to learning. It has been a liability by and large when it has been used as the basis of organization for a learning activity....Textbooks can be an asset to learning when used as resources to which students may go when the need for specific information arises in the process of the group's inquiry.[16]

The following poetry textbooks were included in the survey:

Hillyer, Robert. First Principles of Verse.
-------. In Pursuit of Poetry.
Jerome, Judson. The Poet and the Poem.
Kennedy, X. J. An Introduction to Poetry.
Perrine, Laurence. Poetry: Theory and Practice.
-------. Sound and Sense.
Wood, Clement. The Poets' Handbook.

[16]Knowles, p. 295.

3. The andragogical principles of Malcolm Knowles were studied, particularly using the book, The Modern Practice of Adult Education (as cited previously). In particular, his seven-step process for planning and operating educational programs[17] was applied to the study of poetic techniques.

4. A bibliography was developed, listing both published and audio-visual materials available on campus (as optional resources to which students could have access). Insofar as possible, supplementary materials were selected and requisitioned.

5. The course's opening, planning sessions (Seminar 1 and Seminar 2) were designed, to include the following features:

   a. Textbook for course

   b. Course policies on assignments, grading, attendance, etc.

   c. Syllabus for course

   d. One-page outline/overview of poetic techniques, for two purposes:
      To familiarize students with topic areas. As Symonds points out, "Learning is most efficient when one first grasps the meaning and organization of the whole, and then proceeds to give attention to the parts and the relation of each part to other parts and to the whole."[18]
      To establish required minimum course competencies: specific techniques student should recognize in the poetry of others, and to use in simple poems of his

[17] Ibid., p. 54.

[18] Symonds, p. 54.

Own -- including critical evaluations of poetic techniques.

e. Introduction of various assignment options, to suggest the range of possible approaches, and to indicate that through their choices, students will be directing their own learning.

f. Acquaintance with students' individual poetic interests and motivations.

g. Assessment of students' present levels of knowledge of poetic techniques, following McClelland's advice: "The best testing is criterion sampling....If you want to know how well a person can drive a car (the criterion), sample his ability to do so by giving him a driver's test. Do not give him a paper-and-pencil test for following directions, a general intelligence test, etc."[19]
Students will discuss, in an informal written list, poetic techniques used in specified traditional poems, and may (optionally) bring original poems using traditional techniques.

h. Self-diagnosis of specific learning objectives -- steps to move from present levels, to achieve basic minimum competencies and to achieve personal goals beyond minimum competencies.
An open-question self-diagnosis instrument was designed, for two reasons: It is anticipated that a small group of students (perhaps maximum ten) will be involved; a statistical-type instrument would therefore not be productive. The second reason comes from Mager: "Note student response to the subject through a questionnaire (or direct questioning). Don't neglect direct questions. Sometimes the direct approach is quickest, least expensive, and most valid."[20]

6. A learning design model -- course plan -- was developed (presented fully in Appendix A).

[19]David C. McClelland, "Testing for Competence Rather Than for 'Intelligence,'" American Psychologist, 28:7 (January, 1973).

[20]Robert F. Mager, Developing Attitude Toward Learning (Belmont, California: Fearon Publishers, 1968), p. 72.

7. An end-of-course evaluation was developed. Topics covered were parallel to those in initial evaluation (competence with specific poetic techniques; abilities in reading and writing poetry, in terms of its craft; and personal interests and motivations).[21] In keeping with students' greater end-of-course familiarity with the topic, however, a more sophisticated five-point ranking system was incorporated to provide a greater degree of evaluation. A copy of this instrument is included as Appendix C.

   Two direct open-ended questions were included: What might you suggest to improve this course in the future? What are your own future plans/expectations re poetry?

Limitations and Assumptions

It is assumed that each student would have acquired, from high school and/or freshman English courses, some degree of familiarity with poetry. This background, however, could vary widely from student to student, and as such, could provide a limitation to the productivity of seminar discussions, particularly during early weeks. It is further assumed that any difficulties caused by this diversity would decline as the course progresses, and as students develop a common background of experiences in poetic techniques.

Potential limitations could arise in administration of

[21] Ibid., p. 297.

the course. The Craft of Poetry is set up (as previously explained) as one part of a three-part package, presupposing an approximately equal distribution of enrollment among the three courses -- perhaps six to ten students in each. And each seminar has been planned on the assumption of six to ten participants. A smaller number would increase per-student time and attention, but would decrease student interaction learning opportunities. Conversely, a larger seminar group could increase interaction, but with the limitation of decreasing per-student time and attention.

RESULTS

The first half of the learning design model for The Craft of Poetry course has been planned as a comparatively structured survey of poetic techniques, but with as much student choice as possible in topics of assignments. Thereafter, the last half of the course is comparatively unstructured, with wide options for student projects.

Of the seven textbooks serveyed for the course, the one selected was X. J. Kennedy's An Introduction to Poetry (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978). This text was selected for three reasons:

-It is comprehensible for independent study, with clear, coherent explanations and applications to included poems.

-It is well indexed for student's reference/resource use when pursuing a specific topic, and its items are

understandable even when read in such a non-sequential manner.

-It is compatible for study with the outline/overview developed for this course.

Principal influence on the development of the learning design model has been Knowles' andragogical principles:

> ...three major criteria must be met in building an effectively organized group of learning experiences. These are continuity (the vertical reiteration over time of major curriculum elements), sequence (higher levels of treatment with each successive learning experience), and integration (the horizontal relationship of curriculum elements so as to provide a unified view and unified behavior).[22]

The present course plan has sought to meet these criteria as follows:

Continuity (the vertical reiteration over time of major curriculum elements) is provided by the outline/overview of poetic techniques, which serves as course introduction, then as basis of course organization, and generally as the framework of minimum course competencies (as explained previously).

Sequence (higher levels of treatment with each successive learning experience) is provided by studying, in each of Seminars 4-10, one segment of the outline/overview of poetic techniques -- but expanded in much greater detail and depth.

Integration (the horizontal relationship of curriculum

[22]Knowles, p. 288.

elements so as to provide a unified view and unified behavior) is provided by the special projects students prepare and present in Seminars 11-16 and in final exam project, in which they are challenged to apply and integrate poetic techniques.

Throughout this course plan, students are presented with project options to choose amongst, or to use as suggestions in formulating projects of their own. Each project option (particularly each option in Seminars 11-16) provides a general assignment framework, with as much leeway as possible for students' choices based on individual interests.

The seminar structure provides what Knowles has called a "learning-teaching strategy": each individual investigates a content unit or carries out a directed study project -- then shares results with the group in a seminar format.[23]

Other research findings, as previously reported, have also had an impact on certain aspects of the learning design model. As Hogan urged, the instruction has been planned in a linear, systematic order; within this framework, the student has many opportunities for creative participation and a wide range of autonomous individualized studies. This correlates with the Gestalt approach explained by Fischer.

While dealing with the appreciation of poetry in general, and its emotional effects, major course emphasis has been placed on the craft of poetry -- its techniques -- as tangible,

[23] Ibid., p. 290.

teachable common groundwork both for aspiring poets and lovers of poetry.

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Many poetry courses have been taught on many campuses. The uniqueness of the present Craft of Poetry course, however, lies in its directed-study seminar format, allowing adult students to proceed in a largely independent manner. For this purpose, Knowles' andragogical principles have been incorporated, to benefit students by allowing them far greater opportunity to determine what they'll study and what projects they'll do, on the basis of individual diagnosis and interests. Unlike strictly independent study, this will be balanced by the regular group interaction of the seminars in which students discuss their own projects, and receive feedback. Seminars can thus give the student greater breadth, and can introduce him to topics about which he had not previously known enough to be interested. Combining independent research and creative effort with group seminars would seem to be a productive best-of-both individualized and classroom methods.

Such a poetry course taught by andragogical principles will also have beneficial implications for the college. This program would meet the needs and satisfy the interests of the better student. (It is imperative that the community college, in its concern for the underprepared student, not neglect

the better prepared student -- but that it should find ways of serving the latter's aptitudes and needs, as well.)

As explained, this andragogical Craft of Poetry course -- along with its two companion directed-study seminar courses -- will be implemented at El Centro College during spring semester 1979. Each will meet as a one-hour weekly seminar; for the instructor, their combined contact hours and enrollment comprise "one course" in computation of teaching load. This administrative process has provided essential justification for development of the directed-study seminar method and syllabi.

This project began as a response to low enrollment -- and resultant cancellation -- of numerous community college courses, especially at sophomore level. Such cancellations are detrimental to the college's future enrollment, image, credibility, economy, and morale. Only a few students may need/want a particular course -- too few to justify, economically, a full-scale class -- yet their need is real, and deserves consideration. This directed-study seminar method offers an economically feasible way to meet this need, by allowing low-enrollment courses to be offered, and to provide anti-cancellation insurance for each other.

These advantages have both immediate and long-range implications.

Immediate benefits accrue to students who enroll in a course which, under former systems, would have been cancelled,

Longer range, more students may enroll in El Centro's sophomore courses if credibility and morale are improved: if students have increased confidence that the course will "make," and less fear of class cancellation. This could contribute to retention of students, particularly those at higher academic levels, and hence improve the college's image. Any improvement in enrollment and/or retention has inherent economic advantages. And this type of directed-study seminar curriculum emphasis and fresh approach to a method of learning should ultimately contribute to the college's ability to serve all its student constituency.

On a broader scale, the present course plan serves as a pilot and "model project." Its methods and administration have been planned to be adaptable for other courses, previously taught by various lecture/discussion/lab methods, in other disciplines and on other campuses. It is recommended that they too may explore setting up directed-study seminars to salvage low-enrollment courses.

It is recommended, then, that the present Craft of Poetry directed-study seminar learning design model should be taught and comparatively evaluated on several campuses. In addition, it is recommended that this directed-study seminar learning design model should be compared with a more traditional poetry course meeting for three hours per week; instruments should be developed for their comparative evaluations.

Thus for the individual student, El Centro College, and community colleges in general, this model would seem to have strong potential for positive change.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Syllabus - The Craft of Poetry

OUTLINE/OVERVIEW OF POETIC TECHNIQUES

I. Poetic language
   A. Characteristics
      1. Emotion
      2. Imagery
      3. Condensation
      4. Syntactical relationships
      5. Denotation and connotation
   B. Figurative language
      1. Allusions
      2. Comparisons (simile, metaphor, analogy)
      3. Gradations (hyperbole, litotes)
      4. Associations (metonomy, synecdoche)
      5. Concretions (personification, apostrophe)
      6. Irony
   C. Sound values
      1. Onomatopoeia
      2. Cacophony

II. Poetic genre
   A. Classification (narrative, lyric, dramatic)
   B. Literary elements, as pertinent (plot, character, etc.)

III. Poetic sound patterns
   A. Repetition of individual sounds in close proximity (alliteration, consonance, assonance)
   B. Rhyme
   C. Intonation
   D. Meter
   E. Line length
   F. Pauses
   G. Cadence - primary (sentences) and secondary (phrases)
   H. Stanzaic structure
   I. Poetic forms
      1. Conventional - couplet, tercet, quatrain, sonnet, blank verse, etc.
      2. Free verse

IV. Poetic symbolism
   A. Types and characteristics
   B. Conventional symbols
   C. Original symbols

Appendix A (continued): Learning Design Model

SYLLABUS - THE CRAFT OF POETRY

SEMINAR 1

1. Purchase texts: An Introduction to Poetry (fourth edition)
X. J. Kennedy
Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978

American Heritage Dictionary (paperback)

2. Instructor will explain course policies on assignments, grading, attendance, etc.
An assignment will be due at each seminar-session (after week 1). By the end of the semester, you'll have a total of twenty-four grades: one grade each week 2-10, double grades for projects in weeks 11-16, and triple grade for final. Grading scale for each assignment:
C - completed the assignment on time, and made conscientious effort to follow instructions to best of ability
B - same, with above-average results
A - same, with excellent results
(D and F will be given when assignments are incomplete and/or efforts are inadequate.)

Attendance policy: In this seminar system, attendance is required and is vitally important.
Each seminar "counts" as three class meeting hours.
Therefore, a student who misses
two consecutive seminars (the equivalent of 6 class hours),
or three total seminars (the equivalent of 9 class hours),
will be dropped.
You will be responsible for keeping a log of your independent work outside class, and for turning this in each week. (This fulfills legal requirements.)
If a snow day or teacher's illness cancels your seminar, a make-up session will be arranged. Please come by or phone my office on the next working day. Meanwhile, be working on the next week's assignment; it will be due as scheduled.

3. Syllabi will be distributed:
a. The one-page "Outline/Overview of Poetic Techniques" will be indicated as constituting the course objectives; by the end of course, each student should be competent in recognizing and using each technique listed on this page.
b. First half of course will be a survey of poetic techniques, including poetry reading exercises and poetry writing exercises. (Poems you write needn't be works

of art. They are technique exercises -- like finger exercises when you study piano or floating exercises when you learn to swim. They're a means to an end: a technique to gain better understanding of the craft of poetry.)

c. Scan special project options (Seminars 11-16) to suggest the range of possible approaches, by which choices students will be directing their own learning.

4. Get-acquainted time: Each student will be asked to introduce himself/herself, and briefly explain his/her interest in poetry (favorite poets? written own poetry? future plans/expectations re poetry? hoped-for results from this course? types of preferred course activities? etc.)

SEMINAR 2

1. Text Ch. 1-2, Entrances, Listening to a Voice.

2. Assessment of present levels of poetic knowledge. Students will discuss, in an informal written list, poetic techniques as used in two poems:
   I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud, William Wordsworth
   To Lucasta, Richard Lovelace
   You may use the one-page outline of poetic techniques as a guide, omitting terms you don't already know. For this assignment, disregard content and concentrate on techniques. This won't be graded strictly; it's simply to establish our starting point.

3. Optional: If you are interested in writing poetry, bring a one-page poem you have written using conventional poetic techniques (not free verse).

4. Self-diagnosis:
   a. You may have enrolled in this course to improve your abilities to read poetry and/or to improve your abilities to write poetry. Are you equally interested in reading and writing -- or one more than the other?
   b. With which topics (if any) on the one-page outline do you already feel comfortably familiar? Or are you generally "starting from scratch"?
   c. Scan the one-page outline, the syllabus, and the text. What five or more specific topics and areas do you need/want to work on during the course, both to achieve course's objectives and your own?

SEMINAR 3

INTRODUCTION There are two processes in understanding a poem.

A. Analysis - from Greek ana up + lyein to loose - separation into elements or constituent parts; primarily a logical or rational process.

B. Synthesis - from Greek syn with + tithenai to place - combination of elements (and all they suggest) into a meaningful whole; primarily an intuitive process.

1. Part of "meaningful whole" may be perceived before analysis (but the greater the poem, the smaller is apt to be the proportion of whole grasped before analysis).
2. Part of "meaningful whole" may be suggested via external evidence located in research.
3. Because of its intuitive nature and its dependence on the discoveries of analysis, no specific rules can be set for synthesis.

Text Ch. 3, Words.

Class discussion of diction -- word choice and word order -- as seen in several poems in text.

Begin a word list -- words commonly known but not in everyday use. Feel free to consult your dictionary.

Include at least 20 nouns, 20 adjectives, 20 verbs.

Throughout the course, continue adding to this list -- whenever a good word arises.

SEMINAR 4

I. Poetic language

A. Although the subject matter of poetry is unrestricted, certain characteristics are evident in the content of every poem of quality.

1. It goes beyond logical content to emotional sharing of experience.
2. It has many concrete images, bearing vivid sensory impressions.
   a. Visual images
   b. Auditory images
   c. Gustatory images
   d. Olfactory images
   e. Tactile images
   f. Thermal images
   g. Kinetic images
   h. Kinesthetic images

3. It is greatly condensed, leaving much unsaid.
4. Its syntactical relationships are vitally important.
5. Important words within the poem must carry
   a. Denotative meaning - specific surface idea as word might be "defined"
   b. Connotative meaning - all ideas suggested or symbolized by the word, above and beyond its denotative meaning
   c. Contribution to the sound pattern

Text Ch. 4-5, Imagery, Saying and Suggesting.

Study poems included as examples of imagery: Keats' "Bright Star!" Sandburg's "Fog," Whitman's "The Runner," H.D.'s "Heat," etc.

Then compose a brief poem (8-20 lines) that consists, like the examples, largely of imagery.

SEMINAR 5

B. Figurative language (Example poem: Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress")
   1. Allusions
      a. References to history or geography
         "the Flood" - Noah
         "Indian Ganges...tide of Humber" - widely separated rivers in India and England
      b. References to literature or mythology
         "Let us roll all our strength and all / Our sweetness up into one ball" - Plato, discussing love in the Symposium, represents male and female as having resulted from the division of an originally single being, round in shape, into two halves which are forever seeking to regain their original unity.
   2. Comparisons
      a. Simile - explicit comparison (A is like B; A is as -- as B)
         "youthful hue / Sits on thy skin like morning dew"
         "like amorous birds of prey"
      b. Metaphor - implied comparison (A is B)
         "My vegetable love" (vs. animal)
         "Deserts of vast eternity"
         "And tear our pleasures with rough strife / Thorough [sic] the iron gates of life."
      c. Analogy - extended metaphor (maybe whole poem) of an unnamed parallel idea on a direct one-to-one ratio of aspects represented

Life, like this rendezvous, is time-limited. Pleasures or whatever must be sought in a rush, with no time to waste, since prospects after the time has elapsed are not pleasant.

3. Gradations
   a. Hyperbole - overstatement
      "should grow / Vaster than empires"
      "An hundred years should go to praise / Thine eyes..."
   b. Litotes - understatement
      "thy willing soul transpires / At every pore with instant fires"
      "slow-chapt power"
4. Associations
   a. Metonomy - using an associated idea for the one meant
      "Thus, though we cannot make our sun / Stand still, yet we will make him run."
      Though we cannot make our time stand still, it will pass most quickly if we are enjoying ourselves.
   b. Synecdoche - using a part for a whole, or whole for part
      "Then worms shall try / That long-preserved virginity / And your quaint honor turn to dust..." Whole body -- far more tangible -- will be attacked.
5. Concretions
   a. Personification - attributing human qualities to an abstract/inanimate object
      "Time's winged chariot hurrying near"
      "Rather at once our Time devour, / Than languish in his slow-chapt power."
      "we will make him (sun) run."
   b. Apostrophe - direct address to abstract/inanimate object (not used in this poem, but exemplified in Keats' "To Autumn" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn," and in MacLeish's "You, Andrew Marvell")
6. Irony - using words opposite to, or in conflict with, truth
   "Had we but world enough, and time..."
   "Till the conversion of the Jews."
   "The grave's a fine and private place, / But none, I think, do there embrace."

Text Ch. 6, Figures of Speech

Complete the simile worksheet. Avoid standard comparisons; create fresh ones with vivid imagery.

Name _____

SIMILE WORKSHEET
LIST ONE OR MORE FRESH COMPARISONS FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING:

1. red as
2. blue as
3. green as
4. white as
5. black as
6. quick as
7. slow as
8. dry as
9. wise as
10. sly as
11. sick as
12. big as
13. wild as
14. inevitable (sure or certain) as
15. hungry as
16. eats (lots) like
17. eats (little) like
18. eats (messily) like
19. light (weight) as
20. heavy as
21. dark as
22. pretty as
23. ugly as
24. naked as
25. clear as
26. cool as
27. hot as
28. sweet as
29. mad as
30. crazy as
31. drunk as
32. neat as
33. sharp as
34. busy as
35. work like

SEMINAR 6

II. Poetic genre
  A. Classification of poem as one of the following:
    1. Narrative poetry - tells story or series of events
      a. Popular ballad - anonymous folk product
      b. Literary ballad - written by known poet in popular ballad style
      c. Metrical tale - short story or novel in verse
      d. Epic - long, elevated tone, superhuman hero, events significant to "nation"
    2. Lyric poetry - poet shares (not explains) a focused emotional experience
      a. Reflective lyric - recalls/reflects/contemplates the experience
      b. Elegy - expresses grief at someone's death
      c. Ode - sustained exalted theme, often commemorative
      d. Sonnet - dignified idea in 14 iambic pentameters
    3. Dramatic poetry - told by a character (first person "persona") involved in some type of conflict
      a. Dramatic narrative - incident(s) related by a participant
      b. Dramatic lyric - character shares a focused emotional experience
      c. Dramatic monologue - character addresses other characters, presumably present but just listening
      d. Soliloquy - character speaks to himself, or "thinks aloud"
  B. Application of pertinent literary elements
    1. Plot - interrelated happenings, on all narrative and dramatic poems
      a. Overall plot pattern
        Simple - action moves more-or-less consistently in one direction (rising, falling, or straight)
        Complex - action includes a climax and major reversal
      b. Plot elements
        Exposition - basic pre-story situation
        Complication(s) - action is generated
        Climax - turning point
        Dénouement - unknctting/resolution of the complication(s)
    2. Character - "personality" of each character in narrative and dramatic poems, and the poet-as-character in lyric poems
      Qualities, likes/dislikes, how he lives, what he does, his problems/drives/motives and any conflicts among these, his likeability, his language as it may reveal social, intellectual, or personality information about him.

3. Setting - the time and place may shape or emphasize the ideas/events
4. Point of view - the consciousness/voice/viewpoint from which we "view" the events
   a. Third person (objective, subjective, or omniscient)
   b. First person ("persona" speaks as "I," or first person plural "we")
5. Tone - author's personal attitudes as revealed in the work
   a. "Willing suspension of disbelief"
   b. Cooperate with author: "What did he intend me to see and feel?"
6. Meanings - theme/message/"moral" in the work
   a. May be stated explicitly (as meant) or ironically (opposite true meaning)
   b. Implied - reader must infer meanings "between the lines"

Text Ch. 7, Song

Find (and bring) a people-story from newspaper or news magazine. Rewrite this story as a ballad of 16-48 lines.

SEMINAR 7

III. Poetic sounds

NOTE: Language may be chosen for its sound value.

1. Onomatopoeia - using sounds to suggest sense or idea, as in "The double, double, double beat / Of the thundering drum" (Dryden's "Song for Saint Cecilia's Day")
2. Cacophony - deliberately harsh, difficult to pronounce, unpleasing sound
   "Swine's snout" (Browning's "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister")
   "When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
   The line too labours, and the words move slow;"
   (Pope's "An Essay on Criticism")

A. Repetition of individual sounds in close proximity

1. Alliteration - exact repetition of consonants at beginnings of words
2. Consonance - exact repetition of consonants within and at the ends of words
   a. Plosive consonants (p, b, t, d, k, g) suggest brevity, briskness.
   b. Sustained consonants (m, n, ng, l, r, s, z) suggest length, smoothness.
3. Assonance - exact repetition of vowel sounds.
   a. Short vowel sounds suggest brevity, briskness.
   b. Long vowel sounds suggest length, smoothness.

B. Rhyme - correspondence of final sounds, usually at ends of two or more lines
   1. Rhyme types
      a. Exact rhymes with final vowel sounds and consonant sounds exactly alike
         Masculine rhymes - rhyme of final accented syllables (cat-rat, divine - resign)
         Feminine rhymes with final syllable not accented
            Double rhymes - rhyme of two final syllables with next-to-last accented (sighing-crying, double-trouble)
            Triple rhymes - rhyme of three final syllables with third-from-last accented--often humorous (dustiest-rustiest)
         Internal rhymes with one or more syllables within line
      b. Inexact rhymes with final vowels and consonants partly alike
         Half-rhymes - only half of two-syllable word rhymes: accented next-to-last syllables (pavement-gravely) or unaccented final syllables (river-weather)
         Assonance rhymes - in the final syllables accented, vowel sounds are alike but not consonants (cry-whine, place-rate, places-rating)
         Consonance rhymes - in the final syllables accented, consonant sounds are alike but not vowels (rock-luck, tan-fine, money-winter)
   2. Rhyme schemes - traditional method of marking patterns of rhymes
      a. The first line-ending, and all which rhyme with it, are called a.
      b. The next line-ending which isn't an a is called b, along all which rhyme with it.
      c. The next line-ending which isn't an a or b is called c, along with all which rhyme with it, etc.
      d. Example: Rhyme scheme of Shakespeare's "When, in disgrace with Fortune and men's eyes" is abab, cdcd, efef, gg.
      e. Example: Rhyme scheme of Frost's "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is aaba, bbcb, ccdc, dddd.
   3. Rhyme uses - not an essential in poetry, but when used we may assume the poet intended it to serve the following functions:
      a. Adds melody and creates harmony
      b. Reinforces rhythmic and cadence patterns
      c. Gives finish, importance, and somewhat more emphasis to line endings
      d. Distinguishes structural sections of poem by setting them off from one another.

Text Ch. 8, Sound.

Select one or more books of children's poetry, such as A. A. Milne's Now We Are Six or When We Were Very Young, or a Dr. Seuss book.
Analyze and write a 1-2 page comment on its sound techniques.

SEMINAR 8

(Poetic sound rhythms)

C. Intonation - a speaker of English varies the pitch and volume of his pronunciations.
   1. Most syllables, at basic minimum pitch and volume levels, are "unaccented."
   2. An accented syllable is pronounced with any degree of raised pitch and/or increased volume (above the basic unaccented level).
   3. A poet may deliberately choose and arrange words to make the accents come in a regular pattern; this largely sets the poem's rhythm -- and thus, its mood.
      a. A word with more than one syllable has one accented (see dictionary).
      b. One-syllable key words are accented (usually nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs -- or any one-syllable word which is relatively more important than those before or after it).

D. Meter - a regular rhythmic pattern unit or "set" -- of one accented and one or more unaccented syllables -- which emerges from process of scansion.
   1. Metric foot - one such unit of two or more syllables
      a. Each line generally begins with a new metric foot and ends with a completed metric foot (though one or more unaccented syllables may be added or omitted at end of line).
      b. Virgule / - slanted line marked between metric feet; may fall between words, or may fall between syllables in middle of a word.
      c. Override - any word divided by a virgule between syllables, with at least one syllable in one foot and one syllable in the next.
   2. Regular metric feet - One "meter" will probably be predominant throughout poem (but may include variations, to break the monotony).
      a. Two syllables per foot
         ⏑ / IAMB (adj. IAMBIC)
         / ⏑ TROCHEE (adj. TROCHAIC)
      b. Three syllables per foot
         ⏑ ⏑ / ANAPEST (adj. ANAPESTIC)
         / ⏑ ⏑ DACTYL (adj. DACTYLIC)
         ⏑ / ⏑ AMPHIBRACH (adj. AMPHIBRACHIC)

3. Variant feet - may be used to vary predominant meter -- but never for a whole poem.
   / / SPONDEE (adj. SPONDAIC)
   ⏑ ⏑ PYRRHUS (adj. PYRRHIC)
4. Poetic liberties (especially in older poetry) to make words fit meter
   a. Telescoping or elision of syllables - absorption of an unstressed syllable (com-for-ta-ble becomes comf-ter-ble; in-ter-est-ing becomes in-tre-sting)
   b. Syncope - loss or elision of one or more sounds or letters from middle of word (ne'er, o'er)
   c. èd pronounced as a separate syllable (blessèd, belovèd)

E. Line length - measured by number of metric feet and/or number of syllables or accents
1. In conventional poetry, by number of metric feet per line
   1 foot per line - MO-NOM-E-TER
   2 feet per line - DIM-E-TER
   3 feet per line - TRIM-E-TER
   4 feet per line - TE-TRAM-E-TER
   5 feet per line - PEN-TAM-E-TER
   6 feet per line - HEX-AM-E-TER
   7 feet per line - HEP-TAM-E-TER
   8 feet per line - OC-TAM-E-TER
2. In free verse, by
   a. Number of syllables per line and/or per cadence
   b. Number of accents per line and/or per cadence (less common)

F. Pauses - vary in duration and purpose
1. Phrasal pauses correspond to punctuation.
   a. Longer - between idea developments or sentence groups, such as stanzas
   b. Intermediate - between sentences
   c. Shorter - between phrases, corresponding to internal punctuation (commas, colons, semicolons, dashes, parentheses)
2. Climactic pauses lend clarity or emphasis to word immediately before or after.
   a. May be marked with "caesura" //
   b. May be at a point where there is no punctuation (especially in modern sparsely punctuated poetry)

G. Cadence - measured by the number of syllables in each unit between pauses
1. Primary cadences - sentences
   a. Length and style
      Short and simple - direct, immediate, relatively unevaluative

Long and complicated - sophisticated, intellectualized, evaluative
Parallelisms - balanced ideas of approximately equal value

b. Syntax
Identify subject, verb, object.
If inverted, recast in normal word order.
Decide what each adjective, adverb, phrase, and clause modifies.
Positional emphasis - poet may have inverted word order to locate key words in more emphatic beginning and end positions.
Ellipsis - omission of words
Mentally supply omitted words.
Note probable dulling effect of including these.

2. Secondary cadences
a. Phrases - smaller units within sentences as separated by punctuation and/or caesuras.
b. Line lengths - important in cadence everywhere sentence lengths and line lengths do not exactly correspond.
Enjambment - sentence "straddles" into next line, requiring a considerably shorter pause (often almost imperceptible) than if sentence and line end simultaneously.
Enjambment gives poet more emphatic positions: beginning and end of sentence, and beginning and end of lines.
In free verse, since poet could choose any line length, lengths chosen probably reflect positional emphasis, intended pauses, and rhythm of cadence pattern.

Text, Ch. 9, Rhythm

Write a four-line stanza
1. in trochaic tetrameter
2. in iambic pentameter
3. in dactylic trimeter
4. in anapestic tetrameter

As stimuli for <u>each</u> of these four verses, select and use a different set of three words from your word list: include at least one noun from list, one adjective from list, and one verb from list. These needn't be used right together -- just so they appear somewhere within the verse.

SEMINAR 9

(III. Poetic sound patterns, continued)

H. Stanzaic structure
   1. The stanza is the largest unit of sound within the poem, measured in number of lines.
   2. The stanza is a unit of thought development, often comparable to a prose paragraph.

I. Poetic forms
   1. Conventional poetry has regular meter and line length.
      a. Couplet - two-line stanza (or "sub-stanza") rhyming aa.
         "Heroic couplet" - two rhymed lines of iambic pentameter, forming a self-contained unit of thought
      b. Tercet - three-line stanza
      c. Quatrain - four-line stanza, including the following forms:
         Ballad stanza, rhyming abcb
         Heroic quatrain, rhyming abab
         Other rhyme schemes including abba, aaba, aabb, aaaa
      d. Common-meter hymn stanza - alternates odd-numbered lines of iambic tetrameter with even-numbered lines of iambic trimeter
      e. Sestet - six-line stanza. May be last six lines of sonnet.
      f. Octet - eight-line stanza. May be first eight lines of sonnet.
      g. Sonnet - fourteen iambic pentameter lines, usually with first eight lines (octet) introducing and developing the subject, and the last six lines (sestet) introducing an application or related theme, and reaching a conclusion.
         Petrarchan/Italian rhyme scheme: abba,abba,cdc,cdc or abba,abba,cdcdcd
         Spenserian rhyme scheme: abab,bcbc,cdcd,ee
         Shakespearean/English rhyme scheme: abab,cdcd,efef,gg
      h. Blank verse - iambic pentameter with no consistent rhyme or stanza pattern.
   2. Free verse (vers libre -- free line) has varying line length and meter but must have a discoverable rhythmic basis, such as the following:
      a. Positional emphasis on first and last words (see Cadence)
      b. Equivalence (at least approximately) of number of accents per line or syllables per line

c. A visual/graphic pattern repeated in each stanza
d. Parallelisms - the rhythmic balance of ideas:
Rephrasing same idea in different and/or similar words
Question-answer format
Listing of a series
Repetitive use of same (or similar form) noun, pronoun, verb, etc., in varying combinations
Refrain - a passage repeated exactly, or nearly so.
A series of opposites (e.g. W is X, but Y is Z)
A rhythm of imagery (with rhythm provided in the mental "pictures" evoked)
(Biblical poetry is free verse based on parallelisms, as found in Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Beatitudes, etc. Sacred writings of many religions incorporate free verse poetry based on parallelisms.)

Text Ch. 10, Closed Form, Open Form

In a newspaper, magazine, catalogue, textbook, or advertising throwaway, find a sentence or passage that (with a little artistic manipulation on your part) shows promise of becoming a poem. Copy it into lines like poetry, being careful to place what seem to be the most interesting words at the ends of lines to give them greatest emphasis. According to the rules of found poetry, you may excerpt, delete, repeat, and rearrange elements but not add anything. What does this experiment tell you about poetic form? About ordinary prose? (Kennedy, p. 162)

Write a sonnet, including six words from your word list -- two from each column.
Write a limerick, including three words from your word list -- one from each column.

Study several poems in open verse form, such as some by e. e. cummings, trying to understand their logic.

SEMINAR 10

IV. Poetic symbolism

A. Variations in symbols' scope and importance
   1. Figure of speech symbol - may be a single word or a few words, important in immediate context
   2. Motif - series of related individual symbols scattered through poem, gaining importance by cumulative effect
   3. Analogy - extended metaphor symbolizing an unnamed parallel idea on a direct one-to-one ratio of aspects represented, which reader is expected to recognize
   4. Complex symbolism - expressed ideas symbolize unnamed ideas on a one-to-more-than-one ratio. (Denotative level may be true, but only a small part of larger, more important, more complex idea or group of ideas which it symbolizes.)

B. Conventional symbols (<u>some</u> of the more frequent conventional symbols and what they <u>usually</u> symbolize)
   1. Alpha-Omega or A-Z - beginning and end
   2. Bear - Russia
   3. Blood - active principle in man, or kinship, or violence
   4. Blue - sadness, tenderness, loyalty
   5. Burning torch held aloft - liberty
   6. Circle - perfection
   7. Clay - passive principle in man
   8. Clouds - trouble
   9. Cross - Christianity
   10. Crossroads - point of decision
   11. Crown - king's authority
   12. Cup-shape with stick-shape (any pairing) - phallic (sexual) symbolism
   13. Day and parts of day - ages of man's lifetime
   14. Dove - peace
   15. Down - easier than up and therefore morally less desirable
   16. Eagle - United States
   17. Flag - country and/or patriotism
   18. Fox - slyness
   19. Green - jealousy, or growth and freshness
   20. Hammer and sickle - Russia
   21. Hawk - war
   22. Heart - love
   23. Journey - striving toward a goal
   24. Lamb - gentleness, or Christ
   25. Laurel, esp. in a wreath - victory
   26. Light - knowledge or desirable spiritual qualities
   27. Lion - strength, courage, Great Britain

28. Moon - love
29. Night - death
30. Nightingale - melancholy
31. Olive branch - peace
32. Owl - wisdom
33. Plowing and sowing - sexual union
34. Purple - royalty
35. Red - violence, danger, or passion
36. Rose - fragile temporary beauty, often female
37. Road - life
38. Scepter - king's authority
39. Scythe - death
40. Sea - source of life and/or death
41. Seasons of year - ages of man's lifetime
42. Skull and crossbones - poison
43. Sleep - death
44. Spring - rebirth
45. Star of David - Judaism
46. Sun - nurturer of life
47. Tiger - aggressive, vital, attractive though cruel
48. Uncle Sam - United States
49. Up - more difficult than down and therefore morally better
50. Water - purity and new life
51. Wealth (conspicuous consumption) - status
52. White-black (with or without shades of gray in between) - good-evil or life-death
53. Yellow - cowardice

Text Ch. 12, Symbol

Study a group of specified poems in text (Roethke's "Night Crow," Stevens' "Anecdote of the Jar," and others). Decide if each has a central symbol, or is to be taken more-or-less literally.

Write a poem of 10-30 lines in which you include at least three conventional symbols and at least three original symbols.

SEMINAR 11

Poetic Quality

Text Ch. 14, Telling Good from Bad

Read the collection text calls "a small anthology of bad moments in poetry." Try to put into words the problem(s) in each.
Choose and do one of the following special projects (and in seminar, summarize what you learned or present the poem(s) you wrote).

SPECIAL PROJECTS

You will choose and carry out six of these, during Weeks 11-16.

* Select five poems in text, 12-30 lines each, and complete a poetry worksheet on each. (See sample worksheet in appendix.) (may repeat)
* State in one sentence something you believe about life (e.g. "Honesty is the best policy.") Then, using this theme, write a set of three poems (10-30 lines each), of three different types. Complete a poetry worksheet on each of your three poems. (may repeat)
* Write an analysis of "Lycidas," pp. 223-228, answering the questions on pp. 228-229.
* Read Chapter 11. Then create three "eye poems" of your own.
* Select a prominent poet, and locate books or essays by him/her on the craft and art of poetry. Prepare a research paper on this topic, based on at least four sources. (may repeat)
* Write a long poem or group of short poems for children, 80-100 lines total. Emphasize sound patterns and vivid images.
* Select three poems in text -- 10-30 lines apiece -- and write a parody of each. (See pp. 273-278.)
* Propose a project of your own (clear it with me before proceeding).

In seminar each week, you'll summarize what you've learned in your project, or present the poems you wrote.

SEMINAR 12

Poetic Excellence

Text Ch. 15, Knowing Excellence
In-class discussion of relative excellence of several poems

Complete and present a "special project."

SEMINAR 13

Alternate Versions of Poems

Text Ch. 16 Alternatives
In-class discussion comparing revisions, translations, parodies

Complete and present a "special project."

SEMINAR 14

Discussing Poetry

Text Ch. 13, Myth
Ch. 17, Writing About Poems

Complete and present a "special project."

SEMINAR 15

What Is Poetry?

CONCLUSION Because much writing which is prose or dramatic in form has a poetic quality, and because not all verse is poetry, it seems necessary and now possible to establish a definition of a poem.

A. It must have a discoverable sound pattern, especially rhythm.
   1. Even free verse must have some rhythmic pattern -- otherwise it's merely prose with irregular margins.
   2. In conventional poetry, the quantity and intricacy of sound patterns may be a criterion of quality.

B. It must have a denotative surface-level meaning (which, however, need not be immediately apparent to every reader).

C. It must have connotative meaning beyond the denotative, surface level.
   1. A basic quality of poetry is conciseness or concentration -- its ability to "say" much in comparatively few words (it is in demonstrating this quality of poetry that prose or drama is most likely to be called "poetic.")
   2. Assuming the presence of sound pattern and denotative meaning, a poem's quality may be judged by how much its "quantity" of meaning exceeds its quantity of words.

Text Ch. 18, What Is Poetry?

Based on your semester's work and reading, be prepared to discuss your definition of poetry.

Complete and present a "special project."

SEMINAR 16

Complete and present a "special project."

Discuss choices for final exam project.

FINAL EXAM

Select what you consider to be your best special project.

Make whatever revisions you consider helpful.

Present this as your final exam.

Class members will critique each other's presentations.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AVAILABLE RESOURCES

PR 1175.A649 — Aloian, David, ed. Poems and Poets

PN 1042.B4 — Beaty, Jerome. Poetry from Statement to Meaning

PN 1042.B6 — Boulton, Marjorie. Anatomy of Poetry

PN 1042.B69 — Boynton, Robert W. Introduction to the Poem

PN 1042.C7 — Crane, Ronald Salmon. Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry

REF PN 44.5.D4 — Deutsch, Babette. Poetry Handbook: A Dictionary of Terms

PN 1042.H34 — Hamilton, Anne. Seven Principles of Poetry

PN 1042.H39 — Hawkins, Robert. Preface to Poetry

PN 1042.H47 — Hillyer, Robert Silliman. In Pursuit of Poetry

PN 1042.J45 — Jerome, Judson. The Poet and the Poem

PN 1042.K6 — Korg, Jacob. Force of Few Words

PN 1042.K7 — Kreuzer, James R. Elements of Poetry

PS 324.O8 — Ossman, David. Sullen Art

PN 1042.P4 — Perrine, Laurence. Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry

PN 1031.P65 — Pratt, John Clark. Meaning of Modern Poetry

PE 1505.R4 — Reeves, James. Understanding Poetry

PN 1064.R6 — Roethke, Theodore
On the Poet and His Craft

PR 601.S33 — Schlauch, Margaret
Modern English and American Poetry Techniques and Ideologies

PN 1042.S3 — Scholes, Robert E.
Elements of Poetry

PN 1042.S35 — Scott, Arthur Finley
Poet's Craft

PN 1055.S35 — Scully, James, ed.
Modern Poetics

PN 1042.S6 — Skelton, Robin
Practice of Poetry

PR 1175.S79 — Sweetkind, Morris
Getting into Poetry

PN 1042.T8 — Turco, Lewis
Poetry: An Introduction Through Writing

REF
PN 1064.U5 — Untermeyer, Louis
The Forms of Poetry

PN 1042.W47 — Wheeler, Charles B.
Design of Poetry

PE 1505.W6 — Wood, Clement
Poets' Handbook

REF
PE 1519.W6 — Wood, Clement
Wood's Unabridged Rhyming Dictionary

PN 1021.E5 (also REF) — Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics

PHONODISC
PN 1031.S3U5 — Schreiber, Morris
Understanding and Appreciation of Poetry

35 mm AUDIO-FILMSTRIPS:

The Poetic Experience:
Part 1 What Is Poetry? 88 frames, 12 minutes
Part 2 A Closer Look 72 frames, 11 minutes

When Is Poetry
Explores characteristics of poetic language's imagery and allusion vs. scientific language. 98 frames, 22 min.

APPENDIX B

WORKSHEET ON POEM Your name _____

Title _____ Poet _____

Who is speaking (not just "poet"): man/woman? age? personal situation? background? other relevant information?

What is the "speaker's" mood/attitude/tone of voice?

What is the poem's surface level plot or idea? (Summarize the content of each stanza or line-group.)

Interpret the between-the-lines meaning that the poem communicated to you. What belief/idea/reasoning does it imply?

Why do you agree or disagree with this belief/idea?

Copy and scan two typical lines, in the poem's dominant meter, which is

_____ _____.
Line's total no. syllables

Line #___ _____

Line #___ _____

What is the rhyme scheme? _____

Classify the rhyme type of each letter:

	RHYMING SYLLABLES	RHYMING SOUNDS (in phonics)	RHYME TYPE
a-			
b-			
c-			

etc.

Describe the poem's stanza pattern. (How many stanzas? What length? What rhyme system recurs in each?)

Select and list what you consider the poem's three or four most memorable wordings (from a phrase up to a couple of lines each).

Opposite each, tell what poetic technique it uses: Symbolism -- of what?
Figurative language -- which type?
Special sound effect -- what effect?
Vivid imagery -- what mental picture?
Personal significance -- what in your life?

Appendix C

THE CRAFT OF POETRY: END-OF-COURSE EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Rank each item with a number: 1 - Good, 2 - Fair,
3 - No opinion,
4 - Weak, 5 - Bad

Your competence now in recognizing and using each of the following:

_____ Figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification, irony, etc.)

_____ Poetic genres (narrative, lyric, dramatic)

_____ Poetic literary elements (plot, character, setting, point of view, tone, and meanings)

_____ Repetitions of individual sounds (alliteration, consonance, assonance)

_____ Rhyme

_____ Scansion (incl. intonation, meter, and line length)

_____ Poetic forms: stanzas (couplet, quatrain, sonnet, etc.); blank verse; free verse

_____ Poetic symbolism

_____ Your abilities to read poetry at beginning of course

_____ Your abilities to read poetry now

_____ Your abilities to write poetry (at least in terms of craft and techniques) at beginning of course

_____ Your abilities to write poetry (at least in terms of craft and techniques) now

_____ Your ability now to continue, on a self-directed basis, your progress in reading poetry

_____ Your ability now to continue, on a self-directed basis, your progress in writing poetry

_____ Your level of interest in poetry at beginning of course

_____ Your level of interest in poetry now

_____ How well has this course achieved <u>your</u> goals, and provided what you had hoped to learn?

ANSWER ON BACK OF PAGE:
What might you suggest to improve this course in the future?
What are your own future plans/expectations regarding poetry?